

What is claimed is:

1. In a gaming system comprising a plurality of gaming machines and a first database arranged to store input data and output data, apparatus for providing data storage and communications between the gaming machines and the first database comprising:

a network; and

a data processing unit comprising a second database, the data processing unit being arranged to poll the gaming machines to obtain the output data over the network, to store the output data in the second database, to transmit the output data over the network to the first database, to obtain the input data from the first database, to store the input data in the second database, and to transmit at least a portion of the input data from the second database to the gaming machines over the network.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the network comprises a first network arranged to transmit data

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FOOTNOTES

between the gaming machines and the second database and a second network arranged to transmit data between the second database and the first database.

3. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a first processor arranged to manage the first database and a second processor arranged to manage the second database.

4. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the gaming machines comprise meters arranged to store meter data and wherein the output data comprises the meter data.

5. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the input data comprises meter data for gaming machines played within a predetermined preceding time period.

6. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the gaming machines are responsive to a card bearing an identification code and wherein the input data comprises credit balances addressable in response to the identification code.

7. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the second database stores the credit balances.

8. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the gaming machines generate tickets bearing validation codes from which ticket values may be obtained and wherein the input data comprises the ticket values.

9. The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the ticket values are stored in the second database.

10. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the gaming machines comprise jackpot meters arranged to store jackpot data and wherein the output data comprises the jackpot data.

11. In a gaming system comprising a plurality of gaming machines arranged to generate output data in a first format, apparatus for generating a gaming audit report comprising:

a network; and

a processing system arranged to store a gaming audit program capable of generating the audit report from the output data formatted into a second format, to poll the gaming machines to obtain the output data in the first format over the network, to process the output data into the second format without human intervention,

to store the output data in the second format and to generate the gaming audit report from the output data in the second format.

12. The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the processing system comprises:

a first data processing unit arranged to generate the audit report from the output data formatted into a second format; and

a second data processing unit arranged to poll the gaming machines over the network and to process the output data into the second format without human intervention, wherein at least one of the first data processing unit and the second data processing unit stores the output data in the second format.

13. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the output data in the second format is stored temporarily in the second data processing unit and is transmitted to the first data processing unit.

14. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the output data in the second format is erased from the second data

processing unit after being transmitted to the first data processing unit.

15. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the network comprises a first network arranged to transmit data between the gaming machines and the second data processing unit and a second network arranged to transmit data between the second data processing unit and the first data processing unit.

16. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the first data processing unit comprises a first database arranged to store the output data in the second format and a first processor arranged to manage the first database and wherein the second data processing unit comprises a second database arranged to store the output data in the second format and a second processor arranged to manage the second database.

17. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the first data processing unit stores a first table of player data about play of one or more of the gaming machines by players of the gaming machines, wherein the second data processing unit stores a second table of player data

about play of one or more of the gaming machines by players of the gaming machines and wherein the first table of player data is updated from the second table in the second format.

18. The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the output data comprises meter data generated by the gaming machines.

19. The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the gaming machines generate tickets and wherein the output data comprises ticket data about the tickets.

20. The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the gaming machines comprise jackpot meters arranged to store jackpot data and wherein the output data comprises the jackpot data.

21. In a gaming system comprising a plurality of gaming machines and a first database arranged to store input data and output data, a method of providing data storage and communications between the gaming machines and the first database comprising:

polling the gaming machines to obtain the output data;

storing the output data apart from the first database;

transmitting the output data stored apart from the first database to the first database;

obtaining the input data from the first database;

storing the input data apart from the first database; and

transmitting at least a portion of the input data stored apart from the first database to the gaming machines.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein the gaming machines comprise meters arranged to store meter data and wherein the output data comprises the meter data.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein the input data comprises stored meter data for gaming machines played within a predetermined preceding time period.

24. The method of claim 21 wherein the input data comprises credit balances stored in the first database; wherein storing the input data apart from the first database comprises storing the credit balances apart

from the first database; and wherein transmitting at least a portion of the input data stored apart from the first database to the gaming machines comprises reading at one of the gaming machines an identification code, addressing one of the credit balances in response to the identification code, and transmitting the one credit balance stored apart from the first database to the one gaming machine.

25. The method of claim 21 wherein the input data comprises ticket values stored in the first database, the ticket values being addressable in response to validation codes, wherein storing the input data apart from the first database comprises storing the ticket values apart from the first database; and wherein transmitting at least a portion of the input data stored apart from the first database to the gaming machines comprises generating at one of the gaming machines a ticket bearing the validation code, reading the validation code from the ticket at one of the gaming machines, addressing the ticket value stored apart from the first database and transmitting the ticket value to

the one gaming machine at which the validation code is read.

26. The method of claim 21 wherein the gaming machines comprise jackpot meters arranged to store jackpot data and wherein the output data comprises the jackpot data.

27. In a gaming system comprising a plurality of gaming machines arranged to generate output data in a first format, a method of generating a gaming audit report comprising:

storing a gaming audit program capable of generating the gaming audit report from the output data formatted into a second format;

polling the gaming machines to obtain the output data in the first format;

processing the output data into the second format without human intervention;

storing the output data in the second format;
and

generating the gaming audit report from the output data in the second format.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein said storing the output data in the second format comprises:

storing the output data in the second format at a first location;

transmitting the stored output data in the second format to a second location; and

storing the output data in the second format at the second location.

29. The method of claim 28 wherein the output data in the second format is erased from the first location after being transmitted to the second location.

30. The method of claim 27 wherein the first output data comprises player data about play of one or more of the gaming machines by players of the gaming machines.

31. The method of claim 27 wherein the output data comprises meter data generated by the gaming machines.

32. The method of claim 27 wherein the gaming machines generate tickets and wherein the output data comprises ticket data about the tickets.

33. The method of claim 27 wherein the gaming machines comprise jackpot meters arranged to store

jackpot data and wherein the output data comprises the jackpot data.

34. In a gaming system comprising a plurality of gaming machines and a first database arranged to store input data and output data, a method of providing data storage and communications between the gaming machines and the first database comprising:

dividing the gaming machines into a first group and a second group;

polling the gaming machines in the first group to obtain first output data;

storing the first output data apart from the first database;

transmitting the stored first output data to the first database;

polling the gaming machines in the second group to obtain second output data;

storing the second output data apart from the first database and apart from the first output data;

transmitting the stored second output data to the first database;

obtaining from the first database first input data comprising a portion of the input data for use in the first group of games;

storing the first input data apart from the first database;

transmitting at least a portion of the first input data stored apart from the first database to the first group of gaming machines;

obtaining from the first database second input data comprising a portion of the input data for use in the second group of games;

storing the second input data apart from the first database and apart from the first input data; and

transmitting at least a portion of the second input data stored apart from the first database and apart from the first input data to the second group of gaming machines.

35. The method of claim 34 wherein the gaming machines comprise meters arranged to store meter data and wherein the first output data and second output data each comprises a portion of the meter data.

36. The method of claim 34 wherein the first input data and second input data each comprises stored meter data for gaming machines played within a predetermined preceding time period.

37. The method of claim 34 wherein the gaming machines comprise jackpot meters arranged to store jackpot data and wherein the first output data and second output data each comprises a portion of the jackpot data.

38. The method of claim 34 wherein the first input data comprises first credit balances; wherein the second input data comprises second credit balances; wherein storing the first input data apart from the first database comprises storing the first credit balances apart from the first database; wherein transmitting at least a portion of the first input data stored apart from the first database to the first group of gaming machines comprises reading at a first one of the gaming machines a first identification code, addressing one of the first credit balances stored apart from the first database in response to the first identification code,

and transmitting the one first credit balance to the first gaming machine; wherein storing the second input data apart from the first database and apart from the first input data comprises storing the second credit balances apart from the first database and apart from the first credit balances; and wherein transmitting at least a portion of the second input data stored apart from the first database and apart from the first input data to the second group of gaming machines comprises reading at a second one of the gaming machines a second identification code, addressing one of the second credit balances stored apart from the first database and apart from the first credit balances in response to the second identification code, and transmitting the one second credit balance to the second gaming machine.

39. The method of claim 34 wherein the first input data comprises first ticket values stored in the first database, the first ticket values being addressable in response to first validation codes, wherein storing the first input data apart from the first database comprises storing the first ticket values apart from the first

database; and wherein transmitting at least a portion of the first input data stored apart from the first database to the first group of gaming machines comprises generating at a first one of the gaming machines a first ticket bearing one of the first validation codes, reading the one validation code from the ticket at one of the gaming machines, addressing one of the first ticket values stored apart from the first database in response to the one validation code, and transmitting the one first ticket value to the gaming machine at which the one first validation code is read.